



Texas State Board of Dental Examiners Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Austin, TX – Texas State Board of Dental Examiners Addresses Patient Death Concerns

The mission of the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners [TSBDE] is to protect the public health and safety and promote high quality and safe dental care by providing enforcement, licensing, peer assistance, and related information services to licensees and their patients.

On December 9, 2015, a national article was published with accounts of serious patient harm at dental offices throughout the United States. The TSBDE takes the issues highlighted in this article seriously and expresses its deepest sympathy to the patients and families who have suffered.

Unlike other states, Texas law requires dentists to report the death of a patient that occurred within three days of dental treatment specifically to investigate and determine whether or not the dental treatment contributed to the death of the patient. Each of these cases is investigated to make this determination.

Since January 2010, the TSBDE has investigated approximately 7,000 total cases. The article suggests that 85 of these cases concern patient deaths that occurred because of dental services rendered by Texas licensed dentists. This number actually represents the total number of cases related to the deaths of individuals who had recently received dental treatment that the agency has investigated since January 2010. It does not reflect the number of cases in which a Texas dentist contributed to the death of a patient. If the TSBDE finds that a dentist's treatment contributed to the death of a patient, the TSBDE pursues disciplinary action against the dentist's license. Cases in which the dental treatment actually contributed to the patient death are rare.

The TSBDE encourages consumers to utilize the "Search Disciplinary Actions" tool on its website to research any Texas dental services provider. If you have concerns about a Texas dental services provider, TSBDE encourages you to contact its office at 512-463-6400 or email at complaints@tsbde.texas.gov.

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